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## THE ROUND TABLE

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UNIVERSITY SCHOOL, CLEVELAND, OHIO

Christmastide, 1920

DEAR BILL AND BOB AND JACK AND JIM AND ED AND EVERYBODY:

This is the season when everybody wishes everybody else all the happiness and cheer that anyone can. And being one of everybody, and very especially your friend, companion, and well-wisher, I want you to have all the happiness and cheer that this season, or any other, can bring.

One of the greatest sources of happiness in life, I think, is reading; at least, I have got a large part of my pleasure in life from good books. And it occurred to me that I might help you to some of that pleasure at this time by suggesting to you the names of some of the good stories that have entertained me, and that I hope may entertain you.

I'm not going to recommend Shakspeare, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, etc., etc.—though after all there's nothing better—for you know all about them. But these few are some real *American* stories that I remember to have enjoyed intensely, and, because I know you, I believe *you* will enjoy too if you will read them.

Do you like stories about animal life? *Wild Animals I Have Known* and lots of other stories by Ernest Thompson-Seton are fascinating, especially for younger boys, though I read them when I was grown up. *Bob, Son of Battle*, *The Bar Sinister*, and *The Call of the Wild* are all absorbing.

Do you like stories of fine men? *The Hon. Peter Stirling* by Ford is such a story, and is doubly interesting because it was suggested by the life of President Cleveland. *Caleb West, Master Diver* by F. Hopkinson Smith is the story of a real *man*, and the background is interesting too. Another good story of a two-fisted Christian is *The Sky Pilot* by Connor. Then there is a curious, but real and interesting, New England character that I like in Winston Churchill's *Coniston*.

Do you especially enjoy intense realistic stories of American city life? Then try *The Turmoil* by Tarkington, or better still, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, which might have happened right here in Cleveland. *The Iron Woman* by Margaret Deland, and two stories of Chicago life,

*The Pit* by Norris and *The Common Lot* by Robert Herrick are gripping stories that you older fellows especially will like.

How about school stories? I suppose you have all read *The Varmint* and *Stover at Yale*, perhaps the best American school and college stories. I used to enjoy *Harvard Stories* by Post and *Princeton Stories* by Williams, though they tell of college life of a generation ago. Owen Wister's *Philosophy 4* is one of the best college stories for thinking older boys.

Do you fancy stories of international background, American characters in English setting, with amusing touches of humor? Try Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, you younger boys, and her *T. Tembarom*, you older ones.

Then there are the historical novels. Davis' *A Friend to Caesar* will give you a glimpse of old Roman life. Bennet's *Master Skylark* gives a truly vivid historical story of Shakspeare's England. Read *Janice Meredith* if you want a good novel of American colonial life, and Winston Churchill's *Richard Carvel* fits in a bit later, as well as his *Crisis*, which is one of our best Civil War stories.

All boys like red-blooded stories of western life. You won't go to sleep over Jack London's *Sea Wolf* or Wister's *The Virginian*, and one that to me was doubly interesting because it tells the true story of a great engineering feat, the reclamation of the Imperial Valley in California, as well as a story of love and adventure, is *The Winning of Barbara Worth*.

Perhaps you won't have time to read many whole novels. We are a restless lot, we Americans, but we have our short-stories, a truly American form of literature. Have you read Richard Harding Davis' *Van Bibber and Other Stories* about the amusing New York club man-about-town, who is a real "fellow" under his easy ways and immaculate "togs"? His *Gallagher and Others* is just as good too. Of course you know Poe's *The Gold Bug* and some of the other hair-raisers, but you have read them all? Then there's Bret Harte's *Luck of Roaring Camp* and the other California yarns. I suppose you've read O. Henry's *Four Million* and *Voices of the City*, perhaps the cleverest stories of American city life. I like Myra Kelly's *Little Citizens* and others, and Edna Ferber's *Roast Beef Medium*, and lots and lots more. Oh, and don't miss Joe Lincoln's Cape Cod stories.

These are just a few of the good things that come to my mind off-hand. Every one of these writers has written plenty of other good ones, so if you once start on them, you'll find you've "struck a gold mine." I hope you will find time to try some of them at any rate, and

see if you don't think I know what real pleasure is. Just go to the library and ask for them.

With best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and hoping that you may all have and share with me the pleasures that are "truly worth while," I am, as always,

Your friend and companion,

ROGER C. HATCH

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### THOSE FIRST DAYS OF A SCHOOL SEMESTER!

#### SCENE ONE

(An English class in any large high school on any day the first two weeks of a semester.)

Teacher: "Who was the author of *The Gold Bug*, William?"

William (in triumph): "Oh, we studied a different story in the class that I was just transferred from."

#### SCENE TWO

(An English class in any large high school on any day the first two weeks of a semester.)

Teacher: "Until the class gets better settled, and most of this routine work is finished, we shall take only very simple assignments. So, for tomorrow, you may write on 'The Most Interesting Trip I Took Last Summer.' I am sure you'll find that a good subject."

Pupil in a rear seat, with a mixture of disgust and despair in his tone: "I've had that old thing handed me every semester since I entered school."

Can you not picture both of these scenes in your own school—perhaps, at times, in your own classes? They present a twofold problem: first, that of providing the same assignments for all English classes in each grade during the first few days of a semester so that the inevitable and frequent changes in pupils' programs will not affect their work; and secondly, that of avoiding such commonplace, bromide assignments as the example just given, so likely to occur when the temporarily over-worked and new teachers try to simplify and possibly co-ordinate the work. To make "William" responsible for the same work no matter what class transfers took place, and to aid that second teacher as well as to give the pupils interesting work—this at least, was the double problem met at the Emmerich Manual Training High School (Indianapolis) several years ago, and gradually solved through "The First Ten Days' Lessons" plan worked out by all the English teachers under the guidance and encouragement of their head, Miss Elizabeth C. Hench.